

Sermon Outline.

STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE.

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LUKE XIII, 24.

Introduction:—An account of the contest, illustrated by a case supposed. Suppose an assembly had men to discuss the question of universal salvation, and one half believed that doctrine, and the other did not. Brother France is appointed moderator. Now suppose that after we had debated the question for an hour all of a sudden the Lord Jesus Christ should appear, and the Moderator should say, "The Lord Jesus is present, and we will submit the case to him."

All agree to this. He then asks, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Jesus replies, "Strive," verse 24. But up jumps one and says, "Lord that does not satisfy me." Jesus replies repeating verse 25.

"And yet Lord," says another, "is it not written, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive?" Jesus replies by repeating verse 27, 28. But, says another, "I have taken the Universalist's newspaper a long time, and they teach a different doctrine." Jesus answers by repeating Matt. vii, 14, 13, and 21. But another says, "My father died in the full belief of Universal salvation, and if he was mistaken I want full proof of the fact in black and white."

"He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

1. Why is this gate called strait?

a. Because every man previous to his conversion, is in great distress of mind. Ask Saul of Tarsus: ask these Christians who are earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

b. Because it will admit of nothing crooked. The hearts of sinners are like the hearts of those trees which are crooked. Take for example the man that over reaches, or that uses or sells rum, or makes merchandise of the souls and bodies of his fellow-men: he cannot reach this gate until he stops that business, which comes from the devil.

3. Why is it necessary to go through this gate?

a. Because there is no other way to heaven.

b. Because the sinner, if admitted, could not enjoy heaven without this change. Suppose there were two-hundred warm-hearted, Holy Ghost Christians on a steam-boat which they had chartered to go to a certain place to pray and labor for the salvation of the people. As the boat is casting loose from the wharf, a man rushes on board with a valise in hand. He enters the cabin, and finds the passengers either reading or engaged in conversation. He sits down by a table on which there is a backgammon board, and invites a gentleman to play with him. The man looks at him a moment with surprise, and then begins to preach Jesus unto him. Presently he hears songs of Zion from a group at the other end of the cabin, and then they begin to pray. The man by his side exclaims, "My dear sir, you are lost! you are not of Christ; come, kneel down and pray for salvation. And so drops down by his side and begins to pray. The ungodly man starts up, and thinks this is rather singular. Just then he hears the voice of song from the state-rooms. He walks toward the office, and is met by another who says, "Brother is your calling and election sure?" He breaks away, and rushes to the office and exclaims, "Captain, for God's sake, what kind of people have you on board?" "Why," says the captain, "I have some two hundred live Christians: what shall I do?" "Put me ashore at the first landing." Thus we see the value of being alive in Christ. Christ's way is the only way that leads to heaven.

4. Why necessary for sinners to strive?

a. Because he must go contrary to his sinful passions.

b. Because his ungodly companions and associates will do all they can to prevent him from entering. Parents prevent children, husbands wives, etc.

c. Because he must break away from the strong grasp of the devil.

5. Why are not many "able" to enter?

a. One is not able because he cannot take all his old plunder with him.

b. Another is not able because he cannot take his wealth with him.

c. One is not able because he cannot take his worldly honor with him.

d. Yet another cannot carry his unlawful business with him.

6. Exhortation. "But he said, Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father." Luke ix, 2-9.

An incident occurred sometime since which showed that the men were striving for the straight gate.—A friend of the writer living in the Hoosier state, was recently on a train which was just leaving the station. By the side of it, on the next track, was another train, going the opposite direction. A man near my friend suddenly jumped to his feet opened the window, and hurriedly called, "John." A man at an open window in the other train quickly responded, "William!" A hearty shake of the hand and the short solemn inquiry came from William, John have you kept the faith? "Aye, by the help of God I have." The cars moved away a smile of pleasure on the face of each, and they saw each other no more. What strong evidence of conversion could be given [than what came from the travelers to eternity God guides us into that strait gate.—Amen.

PROCRASTINATION.

ACTS 24:24, 25.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The Jews in a riot were about to kill Paul when Claudius Lysias the captian of the temple guard interfering took him in charge, and sent him to Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, to be tried in a Roman court.

2. Paul has had his first trial; and on the pretense of waiting for Lysias that he may get more exact knowledge of the case, but really to placate the Jews, Felix, the Roman Governor, remands him to prison. Here he remained until Felix was succeeded in office by Festus, about two years. Though a prisoner Paul was allowed many privileges, one of which was, doubtless a source of much comfort and a door of great usefulness—I refer to the liberty of intercourse with his friends.

3. After Paul's first trial, it seems that Felix departed for a season from Caesarea, and it was upon his return that the incident referred to in these verses took place.

4. The interview seems to have been at the instigation of Drusilla,